

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 KINGST 03458 301433Z

ACTION ARA-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 ARAE-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01

INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02

SS-15 USIA-06 /060 W

-----008866 301452Z /43

P 292050Z JUN 77

FM AMEMBASSY KINGSTON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 6033

C O N F I D E N T I A L KINGSTON 3458

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, PORS, ELAB, EGEN, JM

SUBJECT: CONCERNS OF MODERATE JAMAICAN CABINET MINISTER

1. DURING LUNCHEON CONVERSATION JUNE 29, ERIC BELL, MINISTER OF EDUCATION AND A KEY MODERATE IN THE JAMAICAN CABINET, LISTED TO CHARGE NUMBER OF KEY CONCERNS SHARED BH HIMSELF AND OTHER MODERATES.

2. HE SAID THAT IT IS A GENERAL ASSUMPTION AMONG THE MORE WELL INFORMED WITHIN THE CABINET, INCLUDING THE PRIME MINISTER, THAT KINGSTON WILL SEE SERIOUS FOOD RIOTS AND OTHER MOB VIOLENCE BEFORE THE END OF THE YEAR GIVEN THE ACCELERATING "COMING TOGETHER" OF BASIC FOOD SHORTAGES, A BREAKDOWN IN THE FOOD DISTRIBUTION SYSTEM, AND A RISE IN UNEMPLOYMENT. HE SAID IT IS ALSO ASSUMED SUCH RIOTS AND OTHER VIOLENT ACTION WOULD IN THE FIRST INSTANCE BE DIRECTED AT SMALL SHOPKEEPERS (PARTICULARLY CHINESE) ASSUMED TO BE HOARDERS OF SCARCE FOODSTUFFS. HOWEVER, IT ALSO WAS AN ASSUMPTION THAT SUCH RIOTS WOULD CERTAINLY SPILL OUT OF THE GHETTO AREAS AND INTO THE MAIN SHOPPING AREAS OF KINGSTON, INCLUDING THE LARGE SHOPPING CENTERS AND SUPER MARKETS.

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 KINGST 03458 301433Z

3. HE COMMENTED THAT WHILE JAMAICA HAS ALWAYS TOLERATED A RATHER HIGH LEVEL OF UNEMPLOYMENT, THE INCREASE HAS NOW PASSED "TOLERABLE LIMITS" AND IS EXTENDING TO SEMI-SKILLED AND SKILLED WORKERS WHO HAD NEVER PREVIOUSLY EXPERIENCED UNEMPLOYMENT. THE SITUATION, HE SAID, IS GOING TO BE EXPLOSIVE POLITICALLY GIVEN THE DESPAIR EMERGING AMONGST THESE PEOPLE.

4. ON THE POLITICAL FRONT, HE COMMENTED THAT THE MINISTER FOR NATIONAL MOBILIZATION D.K. DUNCAN, AND OTHER PROMINENT RADICALS ARE CAREFULLY BUILDING THEIR SUPPORT BASE AT THE GRASSROOTS LEVEL WITHIN THE PARTY WITH A VIEW TO A "TAKE-OVER" BID AT THE SEPTEMBER FULL PARTY CONFERENCE. GIVEN PRESENT ECONOMIC TRENDS, BELL SAID THEIR PROSPECT FOR MAKING SERIOUS INROADS INTO THE PRESENT MODERATE DOMINANCE OF THE PARTY ARE EXCELLENT -- PARTICULARLY SINCE THE RIGHT AND CENTER OF THE PARTY ARE NOT REALLY MAKING EFFORTS OF THEIR OWN TO COUNTER THOSE OF THE LEFT.

5. COMMENT: BELL HAS ALWAYS BEEN CANDID AND STRAIGHT FORWARD IN SETTING FORTH HIS ASSESSMENTS; WE TAKE SERIOUSLY HIS REMARKS. MOREOVER, HIS VIEWS ARE SHARED BY MANY INFORMED AND THOUGHTFUL JAMAICANS -- AS WELL AS BY OBJECTIVE NON-JAMAICAN OBSERVERS. SUCH ASSESSMENTS ALSO GIVE ADDED IMMEDIACY TO THE CONCERNS VOICED BY BANK OF JAMAICA GOVERNOR BROWN (SEE KINGSTON 3395) AND MINISTER OF STATE FOR PLANNING FLETCHER (SEE KINGSTON 3361) WHO HAVE HAD MOST CLEARLY IN MIND THE PROBLEMS OF GROWING UNEMPLOYMENT AND INCIPIENT FOOD SHORTAGES AS THEY CRITICIZE THE IMF'S HARD LINE ON BUDGET DEFICITS AND THE DUAL EXCHANGE RATE.

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 KINGST 03458 301433Z

6. BELL'S COMMENT THAT THE RADICALS ARE LAYING THE GROUND WORK FOR A FRESH BID FOR PARTY AND GOVERNMENTAL DOMINANCE COMES AS NO SURPRISE. THERE ARE FREQUENT REPORTS THAT MOBILIZATION MINISTER DUNCAN, IN HIS CAPACITY AS GENERAL SECRETARY OF THE PEOPLES NATIONAL PARTY (PNP), IS HARD AT WORK VISITING PARTY CHAPTERS THROUGHOUT THE ISLAND IN ORDER TO STRENGTHEN THE PARTY'S ORGANIZATIONAL WING. WHILE WE DO NOT YET HAVE CONFIRMATION OF THE RECENTLY REPORTED SHAKEUP IN THE PNP YOUTH ORGANIZATION, THE APPARENT DECISION TO INSTALL DUNCAN'S PERSONAL ASSISTANT, SHELDON MCDONALD, AS THE YOUTH FRONT'S GENERAL SECRETARY APPEARS TO BE FURTHER EVIDENCE OF A RADICAL EFFORT TO USE THE PARTY'S ORGANIZATIONAL WING TO STRENGTHEN THE RADICAL POSITION. IF, AS BELL AND MANY OTHERS FEAR, JAMAICA IS TO BE CONVULSED BY FOOD RIOTS AND OTHER VIOLENCE, THE RADICALS WILL BE IN A SOUND POSITION TO GAIN FRESH POWER IF THEY CAN DEMONSTRATE THAT IT WAS THE SHORTCOMINGS OF THE MODERATES WHICH BROUGHT JAMAICA TO SUCH TROUBLE -- AND THEN USE THE PARTY MACHINERY TO ELBOW THE MODERATES ASIDE AT THE FORTHCOMING PARTY CONFERENCE. BANK GOVERNOR BROWN HAS ALREADY MADE CLEAR HIS BELIEF THAT THERE ARE THOSE IN THE PNP -- THE RADICALS

-- AND SOME AMONG THOSE TO THE LEFT OF THE PNP, WHO WOULD
WELCOME THE KIND OF SOCIO-POLITICAL UPHEAVAL WHICH BELL
DESCRIBES, SEEING IN IT THE OPPORTUNITY TO RECONSTRUCT JAMAICA
ALONG "MAOIST" LINES.
DORRANCE

CONFIDENTIAL

NNN

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: FOOD SHORTAGE, UNEMPLOYMENT, POLITICAL STABILITY, MINISTER COUNSELORS, DIPLOMATIC DISCUSSIONS, CIVIL DISORDERS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Sent Date: 29-Jun-1977 12:00:00 am
Decaption Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1977KINGST03458
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D770233-1188
Format: TEL
From: KINGSTON
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1977/newtext/t1977068/aaaaagoy.tel
Line Count: 121
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: a80c1b83-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION ARA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 30-Mar-2005 12:00:00 am
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 2235265
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: CONCERNS OF MODERATE JAMAICAN CABINET MINISTER
TAGS: PINT, PORS, ELAB, EGEN, JM, (BELL, ERIC)
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/a80c1b83-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
22 May 2009
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009